1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

OTHER HANDICRAFTS

283 BAST FIBERS.—From various trees known locally as "mahoe" or "majagua" (M. and S.: *sani*, *wakpi*, *wakmatis*, *tõitu*) the Indians obtain strong bark fiber (M.: *sani;* S.: *wahee*). The best fiber from these trees is pulled off, split, cut into many threads of the desired size and made into ropes and cordage, hammocks (M.: *silmika;* S.: *wuk*), matates or carrying bags (M.: *kũa;* T., P.: *wili;* U.: *wali*). These articles are colored with native bark dyes. The carrying bags are of various sizes and consist of coiled work without foundation; they are furnished with a head strap woven of one piece with the bag.

Bast fiber is also the common tying material of the Indians, and a supply thereof may always be found in the huts. It is also used as pack straps, which are put around the forehead and support the load carried on the back.

PITA FIBER.—Pita or silk-grass fiber (M.: *kuru;* S.: *awa*) is employed for similar uses as bast fiber, and the articles made from it are practically indestructible. It is also made into fishlines, fish nets, and bowstrings, and used to repair shoes. Its extraction is very laborious. The pulpy covering surrounding the fibers is removed by scraping the surface of the leaf on a flat board with the aid of a machete or heavy iron knife. The fibers, which are thereby exposed, are then loosened and easily pulled from their bed by rubbing them crosswise of the leaf with the leaf pressed down upon the flat board. They are then washed to remove any adhesive pulp, dried, and rolled on the thigh into twine.

285 BASKETRY.—Basketry is not highly developed, although in such a well-watered country as the Mosquito Coast there is no lack of palms, vines, creepers, and epiphytic plants which may be used in basketwork. Certain vines are used in tying material, especially in the construction of the dwellings. The carrying bag of bark fiber or pita fiber takes to a large extent the place of baskets. From *wari* withes is made a round basket (M. and S.: *ulun*, *usnuk*), which is used to store calabashes and other small kitchen utensils. Other types made by the Sumu are called by these Indians *wak-tdina* and *sidan*. A large waterproof basket, known locally by the name *patáki*, is obtained in trade from the Black Carib; it is made from *sisin* withes.

● 281 177 LEATHER WORK.—The art of tanning has apparently been learned from the whites. The bark of numerous indigenous trees is used by the Indians for tanning purposes. Leather is used nowadays for drumheads, masquerade dresses, sandals, moccasins, crude saddles, and belts.

383 RUBBER INDUSTRY.—Some of the Indians have learned the process of hardening the milk of the rubber tree (*Castilla* sp.) by treating